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INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
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RUEHBW/AMEMBASSY BELGRADE PRIORITY 0320
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN PRIORITY 1768
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SUBJECT: KOSOVO: TADIC CLAIMS RUSSIANS HAVE PROMISED TO
VETO UNSC RESOLUTION

Classified By: David D. Pearce, Political Minister Counselor, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Serbian President Boris Tadic and Foreign Minister Vuk Jeremic told PM Prodi and FM D'Alema on May 29 that Russia had promised Serbia a veto of any UNSC resolution that would separate Kosovo from Serbia, according to MFA Balkans Office Director Raimondo De Cardona. Tadic told Prodi and D'Alema that the GOS had recently sent a letter to UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon asking for new negotiations with an extended timeline. Tadic told the Italians that Serbia had updated its negotiating proposal to give Kosovo greater autonomy and an internationally supervised economy but no independence. Tadic reiterated the Serbian position that any solution that would grant Kosovo any form of independence without Serbian agreement would be a violation of international law.

¶2. (C) Prodi told Tadic that Kosovo needed to clarify its status in order to move forward. The Ahtisaari proposal was the best option available. Nevertheless, Italy would use its UNSC seat to ensure that the rights of the Serb minority in Kosovo were protected. Prodi and D'Alema told Tadic and Jeremic that Serbia should concentrate on EU membership, not preserving Kosovo's status within Serbia.

¶3. (C) A member of the Serbian embassy told poloff that Tadic and Jeremic had low expectations for the meeting. Even so, the Serbian officials found the Italians less receptive to their arguments than the last meeting in October and had no interest in Serbian proposals for new negotiations. Despite claims by Prodi and D'Alema that Italy has been consistent on Kosovo, the Serbian press came away with the impression that the Italians had shifted their policy away from the Serbian position in favor of Kosovo independence. De Cardona said that the MFA put no stock in Tadic's claim that Russia would veto any resolution that would separate Kosovo from Serbia. Instead, the Italians saw it as a desperate last-ditch effort to try to convince the Italians that the resolution would fail.

¶4. (C) Comment. Prodi and D'Alema took an important step in showing Italy's solidarity with the rest of the Quint at their lunch with Tadic. More importantly, they showed that

the Italian policy has broad support within the Italian government. The fact that the Serbian press noted unequivocal Italian support for the Ahtisaari plan may also help to inject some realism in the domestic public discussion in Serbia.

Spogli